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FURTHER PROMOTION AND ENCOURAGEMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS, INCLUDING THE QUESTION OF THE PROGRAMME AND METHODS OF WORK OF THE COMMISSION

Strengthening of the Centre for Human Rights

Report of the Secretary-General

1. The General Assembly, in its resolution 49/195 of 23 December 1994 on the strengthening of the Centre for Human Rights of the Secretariat,

(a) Noting that the difficult financial situation of the Centre has created considerable obstacles to the implementation of the various procedures and mechanisms and has negatively influenced the servicing by the Secretariat of the human rights bodies concerned;

(b) Noting also that in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, the World Conference on Human Rights stressed the importance of strengthening the Centre;

(c) Taking into account the establishment of the post of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, as well as the request by the General Assembly in its resolution 48/141 of 20 December 1993 for appropriate staff and resources to enable the High Commissioner to fulfil his mandate;

(d) Requested the Secretary-General and Member States to ensure that appropriate additional financial, material and personnel resources are provided in 1994-1995 from within the existing regular budget of the United Nations to enable the Centre and the High Commissioner to carry out, in full and on time, the respective mandates assigned to them by the competent bodies dealing with human rights;

(e) Called upon the Secretary-General to include in his submission for the proposed budget for the biennium 1996-1997, giving due regard to development and other priority activities of the United Nations, human and financial resources for United Nations human rights activities, adequate to respond to the increase in mandated activities in order to enable the Centre and the High Commissioner to carry out their respective mandates efficiently and effectively;

(f) Finally, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit an interim report to the Commission on Human Rights at its fifty-first session and a final report to the General Assembly at its fiftieth session on the strengthening of the Centre and on the measures taken to implement that resolution.

The present report is submitted pursuant to that request.

2. By resolution 48/141, the General Assembly established the post of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. In connection with the adoption of this resolution, the Secretary-General submitted a statement of programme budget implications indicating that, while the High Commissioner would draw on the resources of the Centre to fulfil his tasks, a number of additional posts (one Under-Secretary-General, two P-5 and three General Service posts) and operational funds would be required, totalling US$ 1,471,400 (A/C.5/48/61). The General Assembly did not approve these posts at its forty-eighth session. Instead, it authorized the Secretary-General to enter into commitments of up to US$ 1,471,400 and in connection with the establishment of the office of the High Commissioner decided to consider such additional appropriation as might be necessary and not to exceed US$ 1,471,400 at its resumed forty-eight session. At that session, the Assembly decided to defer consideration of this question to its forty-ninth session. The Secretary-General in his report (A/C.5/49/53) to the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly, on the basis of experience, proposed that instead of the six above-mentioned posts (one Under-Secretary-General, two P-5 and three General Service posts), nine posts be provided for the High Commissioner and his office (one Under-Secretary-General, two P-5, one P-4 and three General Service for Geneva and one D-1 and one General Service posts for the New York Office). The Secretary-General indicated in that report that it was estimated that the revised requirements of the High Commissioner as defined above, could be met from within the balance of the amount for which the Secretary-General was authorized to enter into commitment, i.e. US$ 1,471,400.

3. Regarding the implementation of the Vienna Declaration and the Programme of Action, endorsed by resolution 48/121 of the General Assembly of 20 December 1993, it will be recalled that in the related statement of programme budget implications (A/C.5/48/46), the Secretary-General indicated that one P-5, one P-4 and two General Service posts would be required, as well as operational funds totalling US$ 1,167,500. The General Assembly did not approve these posts at its forty-eighth session. Instead, it authorized the Secretary-General to enter into all the commitments necessary within the above amount in respect of the full implementation of the activities envisaged in the resolution and to consider such additional appropriation as might be necessary and not to exceed US$ 1,167,500 at its resumed forty-eighth session.

At that session, the Assembly decided to defer consideration of the question to its forty-ninth session. The Secretary-General in his report (A/C.5/49/53) to the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly requested the appropriation of the amount of US$ 1,167,500.

4. Regarding the continuing United Nations human rights presence in Cambodia, the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session did not appropriate the additional resources of US$ 1,834,100 requested by the Secretary-General in his report A/C.5/48/78. Instead, the Assembly took note of the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions contained in its report (A/48/7/Add.12) and authorized the Secretary-General to enter into additional commitments up to US$ 1,834,100 under section 21 of the programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995 for the financing of human rights activities in Cambodia. The Secretary-General in his report (A/C.5/48/53) to the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly requested the appropriation of US$ 1,834,100 for that purpose.

5. In summary, in his report to the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly (A/C.5/48/53) the Secretary-General requested an appropriation of US$ 4,473,000 under section 21 of the programme budget for 1994-1995, representing the level of resources for which commitment authority had initially been extended in respect of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the implementation of the Vienna Plan of Action and the human rights presence in Cambodia.

6. The General Assembly, at its forty-ninth session, decided to appropriate, on an exceptional basis, US$ 4,473,000 under section 21, Human Rights, on the understanding that the posts requested by the Secretary-General in his report A/C.5/49/53 for the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Centre for Human Rights and the Human Rights Office in Cambodia are approved on a temporary basis, that all posts shall be subject to a detailed review by the Advisory Committee and the General Assembly at the earliest opportunity at the resumed forty-ninth session.